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Award Number: DAMD17-00-1-0623

TITLE: Markers of Breast Cancer Risk in Women with Benign
Breast Disease

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REPORT DATE: October 2001

TYPE OF REPORT: Annual

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: Approved for Public Release;
Distribution Unlimited

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20020215 069

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 074-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)

2. REPORT DATE
October 2001

3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
Annual (30 Sep 00 - 30 Sep 01)

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Markers of Breast Cancer Risk in Women with Benign Breast Disease

5. FUNDING NUMBERS
DAMD17-00-1-0623

6. AUTHOR(S)

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7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

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8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION
REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)

U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

10. SPONSORING / MONITORING
AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 Words)

Although certain risk factors for breast cancer, such as never having giving birth, have been established, the biologic mechanisms by which these factors increase the risk of breast cancer is not well understood. Several of the possible mechanisms can be measured in breast tissue. One measure is the rate that breast cells replicate, which increases the chance of the genetic errors that cause cancer. Another measure is the organization of breast tissue into structures, which "mature" during a pregnancy and have less cell turnover. To conduct studies to determine if these measures are related to future risk of breast cancer, normal breast tissue is needed that has been collected years before diagnosis among women with breast cancer. The aim of this pilot project is to establish a breast tissue repository that can be used in future studies of markers of breast cancer risk in normal breast tissue. To do this we will identify and retrieve the tissue specimens from women who are members of Group Health Cooperative (GHC) who underwent excisional breast biopsy with benign findings between 1980 and 1998. These breast cancer cases represent the largest series of women with prior normal breast tissue assembled to-date.

14. SUBJECT TERMS

Epidemiology, Genetics and Molecular Biology, Breast Cancer

15. NUMBER OF PAGES

4

16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
OF REPORT

Unclassified

18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
OF THIS PAGE

Unclassified

19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
OF ABSTRACT

Unclassified

20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT

Unlimited

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Introduction

A history of benign breast disease (BBD) is associated with an increase in risk of breast cancer, however risk differs according to the histological characteristics of BBD and other factors. Although histopathology can identify subsets of women with BBD at increased risk (e.g. women with atypical hyperplasia), few women fall into these high risk categories and most will not go on to develop breast cancer.

The aim of this pilot project is to establish a breast tissue repository that can be used in future studies of markers of breast cancer risk in normal breast tissue. To do this we will identify and retrieve the tissue specimens from women who are members of Group Health Cooperative (GHC) who underwent excisional breast biopsy with benign findings between 1980 and 1998. We will identify women who had a benign breast biopsy and later developed invasive breast cancer. We will also identify women who had a biopsy but did not develop cancer to serve as the control group.

Establishment of this tissue repository will lay a critical foundation for future studies of the pathogenesis of breast cancer. Ultimately, improved understanding of why some women are at increased risk for breast cancer will facilitate the development of new strategies for breast cancer prevention.

Body

No progress to date

Key Research Accomplishments

No progress to date

Reportable Outcomes

No progress to date

Conclusions

No progress to date

References

No progress to date

Appendices

No progress to date